

Istook Named 'Legislator of Year' By Abstinence Group

Washington, D.C. – The nation's largest group of abstinence educators honored Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) this week with its top award.

"Congressman Ernest Istook has been a major proponent for abstinence education in Congress," according to a statement released by the abstinence group. **"He has succeeded in a personal effort to secure a major increase in funds to promote teen abstinence. The Legislative Impact Award was given to Congressman Istook for impacting our nation's greatest resource – our youth."** The award was given at the annual meeting of the National Abstinence Clearinghouse this weekend.

Last year Istook's work expanded federal funding for abstinence education by 40%. Istook's efforts--helped by bipartisan support--increased funding by \$20-million in the current fiscal year, with another \$30-million already forward-funded for FY 2002. Istook's legislation established a competitive grant system to distribute the funds nationwide.

Istook says he shares President Bush's goal of increasing abstinence funding at least to equal federal family planning and sex education funding.

"Government must quit undercutting what parents teach to their kids, and instead reinforce what's taught at home," says Istook, **"That can fix many problems before they start. If kids aren't having kids—and instead wait for true love, maturity, and marriage--then they stay in school, become self-sufficient, and don't get trapped in poverty. All of America will benefit, and all of America needs to unite in this effort."**

Istook spoke in Miami at the group's international conference last weekend.